



**Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

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BLM Oklahoma Field Station Manager Receives Employee of the Year Award

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Field Station Manager in Moore, Okla., Mary Lou Drywater, was recently honored by the Federal Executive Board (FEB) of Oklahoma as Employee of the Year. She received the award for Outstanding Community Service for her work as chairperson of the FEB's American Indian Council since 2001. In this capacity, Ms. Drywater strives to advance opportunities for American Indians within the state, through seminars, lectures, and demonstrations.

Her work on the FEB Council complements her BLM role. The BLM in Oklahoma works with Tribes and individual Indian allottees on matters involving oil and gas leasing in the state.

In nominating her for the award, BLM Field Office Manager John Mehlhoff observed, "During her time as chairperson of this Council, Mary Lou has had the opportunity to expand on the Bureau's important work in Oklahoma and the services we provide to our customers. She has had many contacts with Tribes and other agencies which has greatly enhanced communications and coordination. This outreach has been very beneficial to the mission of our agency and improved our ability to provide valuable services to the Indian people of this state."

The award was presented at a luncheon May 2 at the Sheridan in Oklahoma City. The event was held by the FEB to kick off National Public Service Recognition Week in Oklahoma. In his annual declaration President Bush said, "The important work of government employees strengthens our Nation and helps many realize the promise of America. I applaud our public servants for (their) leadership and dedication to excellence in serving the American people."

Ms. Drywater is an enrolled member of the Hopi Tribe and is a descendant of the "Dine" or Navajo Nation. She was born in Lawton, Okla., and adopted at nine months by Mr. and Mrs. William H. "Bill" Ellis of Muskogee. She graduated from Muskogee Central High School and subsequently went on to study at Bacone College in Muskogee, graduating with an Associates Degree in Business Administration in 1971. She currently lives in Norman, Okla.

The BLM is an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior. The BLM administers 261 million surface acres of America's public lands, located primarily in 12 Western States. The BLM sustains the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The FEB exists to provide closer coordination among Federal agencies. Through the FEB, agencies collaborate on matters ranging from management and budgetary procedures, personnel policies, recruitment, etc.